

House Bill 252

By: Representatives Morgan of the 39<sup>th</sup>, Kaiser of the 59<sup>th</sup>, Benfield of the 85<sup>th</sup>, and Reece of the 11<sup>th</sup>

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

To amend Part 12 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to effectiveness of educational programs, so as to create the "Georgia Closing the Achievement Gap Commission"; to provide for its membership, purpose, authority, and duties; to provide for periodic reports; to provide for per diem and expenses for its members; to provide for staff and administrative support; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

**SECTION 1.**

Part 12 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to effectiveness of educational programs, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

"20-2-286.

(a)(1) There is created a commission to be known as the 'Georgia Closing the Achievement Gap Commission,' referred to in this Code section as the commission.

(2) The commission shall be appointed by the State Board of Education and shall consist of:

(A) Four members recommended by the Governor;

(B) Three members recommended by the President of the Senate;

(C) Three members recommended by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

(D) One member recommended by the chairperson of the Senate Education and Youth Committee; and

(E) One member recommended by the chairperson of the House Committee on Education.

The Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the chairperson of the Senate Education and Youth Committee, and the chairperson of the House Committee on Education shall each recommend to the State Board of Education

a list of no fewer than two nominees for each appointment to the commission. The appointments shall be made as soon as feasible but no later than September 1, 2009. Each member shall serve a term of two years; however, for the purpose of providing staggered terms, of the initial appointments, six members shall be appointed to one-year terms and six members shall be appointed to two-year terms as determined by the State Board of Education. Thereafter, each appointee shall serve a two-year term unless the State Board of Education, after review and upon recommendation by the initial recommending authority, extends the appointment.

(3) In making appointments to the commission, the State Board of Education shall ensure that representatives for at-risk student populations have significant representation on the commission and that the commission includes a group of diverse individuals representative of Georgia's school population.

(4) If a vacancy occurs on the commission, it shall be filled by the State Board of Education from a recommendation by the appropriate authority according to the procedure set forth in this subsection.

(5) The members of the commission shall annually vote to appoint a chairperson and a vice chairperson from among its membership.

(b) The purpose of the commission is to provide a public policy focus on closing the student achievement gap that exists for at-risk students, including groups of students disaggregated by ethnicity, sex, disability, language proficiency, geographic distribution, and socioeconomic status. The commission is to develop successful strategies, reports, and recommendations that will assist in closing this student achievement gap. The commission shall focus on disaggregated student achievement data and shall research programs and strategies utilized in schools in Georgia and nationally to reduce the achievement gap. The commission shall provide reports and recommendations to the Education Coordinating Council and the General Assembly regarding closing the gap in student achievement in Georgia.

(c) The commission shall be authorized to:

(1) Gather accurate and reliable data and research information pertaining to the status of at-risk students in the Georgia public school system;

(2) Identify and visit education programs and other efforts within and outside Georgia that appear to be successful in yielding significant positive results for at-risk students;

(3) Consult with higher education faculty members and other persons who have been engaged in extensive research and observation related to these issues and encourage their direct involvement in the activities of the commission;

(4) Conduct hearings throughout the state for the purpose of obtaining meaningful information regarding successful education programs and efforts related to those concerns;

(5) Identify, consult, and meet with representatives of national, regional, and state-level organizations and agencies that could be particularly helpful in addressing the concerns of at-risk student achievement;

(6) Devise recommendations regarding steps that should be taken to address the concerns of at-risk student achievement and the steps that should be taken separately and collectively by:

(A) State government agencies;

(B) Local government agencies;

(C) Public schools and higher education institutions;

(D) Nonprofit organizations;

(E) Professional educational organizations;

(F) Foundations;

(G) Faith based organizations or institutions;

(H) Civic organizations;

(I) The business community; and

(J) Other entities; and

(7) Receive reports from and consult with the Office of Student Achievement regarding the student achievement results including all disaggregated student achievement data.

(d) The commission should place particular emphasis on reviewing programs and efforts that have been successful in attaining:

(1) Improved educational achievement among at-risk students;

(2) Reduction of school discipline and behavioral problems that hinder student achievement;

(3) Reduction of at-risk student dropout rates; and

(4) Improved parental involvement in a student's academic achievement and in the school of the student.

(e) The commission shall periodically report to the Education Coordinating Council and the General Assembly their findings and recommendations including any legislation that the commission has determined is needed to implement their recommendations.

(f) The commission shall receive per diem, subsistence, and travel allowance subject to appropriation by the General Assembly.

(g) The commission shall be provided staff and administrative support by the Office of Student Achievement to carry out the authority described in this Code section."

98

**SECTION 2.**

99

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.